

Message Text

SECRET

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47

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
----- 080796

O 181305Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1885

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 0204

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 : GDS

TAGS : MARR, BA

SUBJECT : MIDEASTFOR: REASSURANCES REGARDING FORCE

REFERENCES : MANAMA 96, 101, 164; STATE 18316

SUMMARY: GOB HAS ASKED SOME SLIGHT EXPANSION OUR REASSURANCES RE MIDDLE EAST FORCE MISSION, OSTENSIBLY TO BRACE IT TO ANSWER PARLIAMENTARY CRITICS "IN LIGHT OF RECENT AREA DEVELOPMENTS," I.E., RUMORS OF PLANS FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION AND DISCUSSION MASIRAH LANDING RIGHTS. URGE WE MAKE TEXTUAL CHANGE MEETING INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE SPECIFIC REASSURANCE CONTAINED IN SUGGESTED LANGUAGE MANAMA 96.

1. PRIOR TO MY SCHEDULED FEBRUARY 17 APPOINTMENT WITH LEGAL MINISTER BAHARNA TO DISCUSS AT HIS REQUEST NEED FOR "CLARIFICATIONS" IN OUR PROPOSED LETTER (PARA 4 STATE REFTTEL), I CAUGHT FOREIGN MINISTER BRIEFLY AT AIRPORT. ASKED IF "CLARIFICATIONS" WERE SUBSTANTIVE IN NATURE. HE SAID CABINET HAD FOUND OUR REASSURANCES WELL INTENTIONED BUT INADEQUATE IN LIGHT OF RECENT "DEVELOPMENTS" RAISING DOUBTS IN AREA ABOUT US MILITARY INTENTIONS TOWARD ARAB OIL STATES. COULD WE "IMPROVE" REASSURANCES? I SAID I HAD BETTER TALK TO "HIS LAWYER."

2. BAHARNA IN THIRTY MINUTE MEETING EXPANDED ON GOB'S PROBLEM WITH OUR PROPOSED LANGUAGE. RESTATEMENT 1971 GATCH LETTER REASSURANCES AND GENERAL STATEMENT US POLICY

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TOWARDS GULF STATES WERE FINE INSOFAR AS THEY WENT. UNFOR-

TUNATELY, 1971 REASSURANCES HAD BEEN GIVEN IN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT POLITICAL CLIMATE. RECENT MEDIA DISCUSSION PLANS FOR US INTERVENTION IN ARAB OIL STATES AND RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT USG INTENTION TO SEEK LANDING RIGHTS IN MASIRAH HAD CHANGED POLITICAL CLIMATE. CABINET FELT "RATHER VAGUE" ASSURANCES IN OUR PROPOSED TEXT INSUFFICIENT TO WITHSTAND OTHER ARAB, AND PARTICULARLY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, CRITICS WHO WOULD SEEK REASSURANCES NOT ONLY ABOUT WHAT MIDDLE EAST FORCE INTENDS TO DO BUT ALSO ABOUT WHAT IT "DOES NOT INTEND TO DO."

3. I POINTED OUT INTENT PHRASEOLOGY OUR PROPOSED TEXT IS TO PUT MIDDLE EAST FORCE IN HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE, NOTING THAT GOB COULD CLAIM THAT IT REASSURED NOT ONLY BY THIS LATEST USG POLICY STATEMENT, CONTAINING "SAFEGUARD" OF PROMISE TO CONSULT WITH GOB PRIOR TO ANY CHANGE IN MIDDLE EAST FORCE MISSION, BUT ALSO BY THE LONGSTANDING EXPERIENCE OF AREA STATES WITH FRIENDLY AND PEACEFUL NATURE OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE ACTIVITIES. AS WE WENT OVER TEXT OF PROPOSED LETTER CAREFULLY, I SOUGHT TO PERSUADE BAHARNA THAT CAREFUL READING OF IT GAVE ALL REASSURANCES GOB COULD REASONABLY WANT OR EXPECT. I POINTED OUT THAT USG HAD PAINSTAKINGLY CLARIFIED AND EXPLAINED ALL ITS RECENT STATEMENTS AND ACTS WHICH HAD BEEN MISINTERPRETED IN SOME COUNTRIES TO PERMIT ALLEGATION OF HOSTILE US ATTITUDE TOWARD ARAB OIL STATES. I HAD GIVEN FOREIGN MINISTER ALL THESE CLARIFICATIONS AND WAS PREPARED TO GO OVER THEM WITH HIM IN DETAIL TO ASSURE HIM SUFFICIENT AMMUNITION TO ANSWER THOSE CRITICS SEEKING TO LINK ALLEGED HOSTILE INTENTIONS TOWARD AREA WITH MIDDLE EAST FORCE PRESENCE. GOB HENCE WAS SUFFICIENTLY ARMED TO COMBAT DOMESTIC OR REGIONAL CRITICISM OF US POLICY TOWARD AREA. IN ANY EVENT, WHATEVER UNCHARITABLE INTERPRETERS MIGHT THINK OF US INTENTIONS TOWARD AREA, IT IS OBVIOUS THE VERY NATURE OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE ACTIVITY PRECLUDES IT FROM PLAYING ANYTHING OTHER THEN FRIENDLY ROLE. HENCE IT IS UNREASONABLE FOR GOB TO EXPECT US TO MEET GENERAL AND UNFOUNDED CRITICISM THROUGH VEHICLE OF SPECIFIC REASSURANCES DEALING WITH MISSION OF AN "INNOCENT PARTY," MIDDLE EAST FORCE.

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4. BAHARNA CONCEDED THIS LAST POINT BUT WENT ON TO PLEAD NEED TO COUNTER HOSTILE PARLIAMENTARY CRITICS. I ASKED HIM IF I SHOULD REPORT TO WASHINGTON THAT GOB FEARED ITS CRITICS OF THAT CABINET ITSELF DOUBTED SINCERITY OUR REASSURANCES AND INTENTIONS. HE HASTENED REASSURE ME GOB FULLY CONFIDENT US INTENTIONS SUPPORT FAVORABLE INTERPRETATION OF LANGUAGE OUR PROPOSED LETTER BUT THAT GOB

SINCERELY FEELS IT NEEDS SOMETHING MORE.

5. BAHARNA HESITATED TO SUGGEST SPECIFIC AMENDING LANGUAGE BUT FINALLY AGREED THAT HE AND PRESUMABLY GOB WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH LETTER LEAVING TEXT CONTAINED PARA 4 STATE 18316 INTACT BUT ADDING AFTER "I WISH TO INFORM YOU THAT THE FOREGOING ASSURANCES REMAIN IN EFFECT" A CLAUSE CONTAINING A SPECIFIC REASSURANCE RELATING TO MIDDLE EAST FORCE MISSION WHICH WOULD OF COURSE BE FOLLOWED BY REASSURING STATEMENT OF GENERAL US POLICY TOWARD GULF CONTAINED IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE OF PROPOSED TEXT.

6. RECOMMENDATION: WHAT GOB IS OBVIOUSLY SEEKING IS THE SUBSTANCE OF SPECIFIC ASSURANCE SUGGESTED TEXT PARA 4 MANAMA 96 WHICH WOULD NOW READ "AND SPECIFICALLY THAT THE US NAVY FORCES USING FACILITIES IN BAHRAIN ARE NOT OPERATING WITH INTENT OR THREAT OF HOSTILE ACTION AGAINST ANY STATE IN THE AREA." IN THE INTEREST OF WRAPPING UP THIS PROBLEM IN A MANNER SATISFACTORY TO BOTH PARTIES, I URGE WE GO THIS EXTRA MILE WITH GOB UNLESS IT RAISES SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF POLICY AND CANDOR THAT FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT I DO NOT PERCEIVE. WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WE CAN GET BY WITH WATERING DOWN THIS LANGUAGE SLIGHTLY, I CAN GIVE NO ASSURANCES TO THIS EFFECT BUT AM REASONABLY CONFIDENT

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O 181305Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1886

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAMA 204

EXDIS

THIS LANGUAGE WILL SUFFICE TO RESOLVE WHAT GOB STOUTLY MAINTAINS IS MERELY A MATTER OF BRACING IT TO ANSWER CRITICS. PRESUMPTION GOOD FAITH ON GOB'S PART

IN THIS REGARD IS STRENGTHENED BY FACT THAT CABINET HAD
LEGAL MINISTER, RATHER THAN FOREIGN MINISTER, RAISE
THIS PROBLEM WITH ME, THUS IMPLYING THAT AS POLICY
MATTER GOB HAS DETERMINED TO END THIS LONG NEGOTIATION
IN AGREEMENT IF WE CAN GET THE LANGUAGE RIGHT. PLEASE
ADVISE SOONEST.

7. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH PASS THIS MESSAGE TO SECDEF,
CNO, JCS, CINCUSNAVEUR AND COMIDEASTFOR.
TWINAM

SECRET

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